REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Description of amendments

In the specification, amendments have been made to correct typographic errors, and a new abstract has been provided.

Claims 7-18 are now pending and under examination. Applicant has added claims 7-18, and cancelled claims 1-6. No new matter has been added.

Objections to the specification

The specification was objected to for containing informalities. Applicant has amended the specification to correct the informalities.

Objections to the claims

Claims 1-6 were objected to for containing informalities. The objection is rendered moot by the cancellation of claims 1-6.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103(a)

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Yamaguchi* (U.S. Patent 6,324,369). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Corrigan* (U.S. Patent 5,345,298). Claims 3/1 and 4/1 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Yamaguchi* in view of *Nagaoka* (U.S. Patent 5,724,635). These rejections are rendered moot by the cancellation of claims 1-6.

Patentability of new claims 7-18

For the following reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 7-18 are patentable.

In claim 1, the cross sectional area of the guide passage of the guide member surrounding the toner receiving opening in the developing apparatus

body proper above the agitation/transfer means to guide toner onto the agitation/transfer means is increased from the toner receiving opening in a direction towards the agitation/ transfer means.

In *Yamaguchi*, the toner is guided through a parallel guide passage. In *Nagaoka*, the toner is guided through the tapered part of a toner hopper tapered towards the stirrer having a spiral blade. In *Corrigan*, the toner is guided through a toner hopper tapered towards the toner dispensing tube. Therefore, the cited references are different from claim 1.

In claim 13, a guide member is provided to the toner accommodating means (cartridge) to surround the toner supply opening of the toner accommodating means and to prevent pilling up of toner such that the toner guide member protrudes through the toner receiving opening in the developing apparatus body proper down below the toner receiving opening when the toner accommodating means is mounted. This feature is not disclosed by any of the cited references.

Therefore, the cited references do not teach or suggest each and every limitation of the two independent claims (*i.e.*, claims 7-13).

The cited references also do not teach or suggest the limitations of the dependent claims. For example, the cited references do not teach or suggest that the guide passage of a toner guide broadens towards the agitation/transfer means (claims 8 and 14).

Claims 9 and 15 each recite that the toner guide member is provided so that the vertical center line of the toner guide passage is offset from a vertical line passing through the center of rotation of the member with a spiral blade and a scraper (agitation/transfer means, hereafter referred to an agitator) toward upstream of the rotation direction thereof. The configuration cited in *Nagaoka*

may seem to be similar to this, but it is fundamentally different. In *Nagaoka*, the toner guide passage is provided so that the vertical center line of toner guide passage is offset from a vertical line passing through the center of rotation of the stirrer toward down stream of the rotation direction, that is, the offset of the guide passage from the stirrer, or agitator is opposite to that of the present invention in respect to the rotation direction of the stirrer as can be recognized by comparing the rotation direction shown in FIG. 9 of *Nagaoka* and that of FIG. 3 of the present invention.

According to the present invention, the guide member is located to be offset towards upstream of the rotation direction of the agitator so that the agitating blade agitates the toner falling down through the toner guide passage by acting on the toner in the counter gravity direction and loosen the toner more easily. An effect like this can not be achieved by the configuration of *Nagaoka* in which the offset of the guide passage in respect to the rotation direction of the stirrer is opposite to that of the present invention.

Claims 10, 12 and 14 recite that the toner guide member is provided so that the vertical center line of the toner guide passage is offset from a vertical line passing through the center of rotation of the agitator toward upstream of the rotation direction thereof, and that the opening end of the guide member facing the agitator side is formed to run along the periphery of the spiral blade of the agitator. In *Nagaoka*, the peripheral wall (eaves portion) 3b of the guide part (dispersion block plate) 3 is formed to run along the periphery of the blade of the stirrer, not that the opening end of the guide passage facing the stirrer is formed to run along the periphery of the blade of the stirrer.

Claim 17 recites that the developing apparatus body proper is provided with a shutter mechanism, the shutter being opened or closed by utilizing the protruded part of the guide member attached to the toner accommodating means

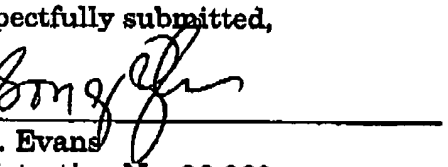
to protrude from the toner receiving opening down below the toner receiving opening when the toner accommodating means is mounted to the developing apparatus body proper. A configuration like this is not disclosed in any of the cited references.

In view of the foregoing, the application is respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance, and prompt favorable action thereon is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #100689.52860US).

Respectfully submitted,

August 1, 2005



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